

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02) voted today in favor of H.R. 3961, the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act, which will repeal a 21 percent fee reduction scheduled for January 2010 and replace it with a stable system to guarantee that Medicare beneficiaries continue to enjoy the same access to care that they have today.

“We are fortunate to have dedicated physicians in Southwest Georgia who provide outstanding services for their patients,” Bishop said. “Today’s vote ensures that doctors will be able to continue providing high quality health care services to our seniors and veterans without the threat of ever-larger fee cuts followed by short-term patches.”

In addition to replacing the broken Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula – which is used to determine annual Medicare physician fee updates – with fairer growth targets to keep doctors’ pay steady, the bill also promotes primary care by providing an extra growth allowance for primary care services that can keep patients healthier longer. It also encourages integrated care so doctors communicate on a patient’s care.

Finally, the bill will have statutory “pay-as-you-go” (PAYGO) legislation attached before it is sent to the Senate, a move that reinforces the 111th Congress’ commitment to put this principle into law and restore fiscal discipline. The PAYGO principle of budget discipline requires Congress to offset all new policies that reduce revenues or expand spending. Congressman Bishop was an original co-sponsor of the PAYGO bill that was approved by the House in July.